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EXPANSION AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, 1865-71.

I.

IN the years following the Civil War there occurred a series of attempts to bring about the annexation of certain non-contiguous territories to the United States. In one case — that of Alaska — success was attained ; but in all the others, after prolonged effort on the part of an active band of expansionists, the stubborn resistance of both houses of Congress proved insurmountable. Yet, in spite of the different outcome, the movement of 1865-71 offers many points of resemblance to the recent series of annexations, and the reasons offered for and against expansion were essentially the same as those now made familiar by three years of vigorous debate.

The conditions in the United States which proved unfavorable to an expansionist policy in the earlier period may be summed up at the outset. It is true that then, as in 1898, the country was filled with self-confidence after the conclusion of a successful war, and no less with a keen sense of the hostility of European nations. At that time, as now, one foreign power by a show of friendship during the war had won the enthusiastic gratitude of the public, the difference being that Russia held the place occupied in 1898 by Great Britain. But, on the other hand, the United States of 1865-71 was not belligerent. The public had no enthusiasm over war, and the internal conditions of the country were such as fully to occupy all minds. Burdened under a mountainous debt, obliged to grapple with the difficulties of a depreciated currency and the reduction of the war taxes, the country was in no mood to incur large new expenditures. The harassing problem of reconstruction, involving the military control of eleven states, absorbed attention and made the prospect of additional dependent territory unattractive. Finally, the economic interests of the country, although expanding with prodigious rapidity, were

turned irresistibly toward internal development — to railways and manufactures and away from shipping and foreign trade. There was no general demand for wider markets, no widespread desire for a chance to make investments outside the federal limits. The only forcible reasons which at that time suggested a policy of annexation were political and military ones, resulting from the experience of the Civil War, and these appealed to a comparatively limited number of persons.

That, under these circumstances, any attempts were made to annex new territory, was due to the presence of W. H. Seward in Johnson's cabinet as secretary of state. Seward was an original expansionist, a man of inveterate optimism, very susceptible to large ideas and given to sanguine speculations regarding the future destiny of the human race. Realizing that with Johnson's term his political career would probably close, he felt ambitious to signalize himself by diplomatic achievement, the more especially since his adherence to Johnson's plan of reconstruction had made him the object of general radical denunciation.¹ Since Johnson's entire interest was absorbed in the struggle with Congress over reconstruction, Seward had a free hand, and he succeeded in making a surprising number of treaties with all sorts of powers, large and small, on all kinds of subjects.² In method he was a diplomatist of the old school, quiet, suave, secretive, aiming above all things to avoid taking the public into his confidence.

The instant the pressure of war began to diminish Seward opened negotiations to secure a naval station in the West Indies, an object rendered very important in his eyes by the events of the war — the difficulties of keeping up a blockade on the Southern coast and, still more, of patrolling the Gulf and the Caribbean Sea against Confederate cruisers. Into the diplomatic details of what followed it is needless to enter here, a summary of the principal steps being all that the limits of this article will permit.

¹ Bancroft, Seward, II, 470-472.

² See list in *Treaties and Conventions since 1776*, Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 38, 41 Cong., 3 sess.

In January, 1865, Seward suggested to General Raasloff, the Danish minister, that the United States might buy the small Danish Islands, St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.¹ The Danish government, at that time still sore over the loss of Holstein and Schleswig, was at first not at all willing ; but a year later a new ministry gave Raasloff power to negotiate. Meanwhile Seward had gone to the West Indies to see things for himself, visiting in succession St. Thomas, St. Croix, San Domingo, Hayti and Cuba.² In January, 1866, Raasloff and Seward discussed the project, the Danish minister asking no less than twenty million dollars as a minimum price. The affair dragged and, Raasloff returning to Denmark in July, 1866, the negotiations were transferred to Copenhagen, where C. H. Yeaman conducted them for the United States. It was not until the winter of 1867, when still another Danish ministry came into office with a real willingness to sell the islands, that any progress was made.

In the meantime a second negotiation had been begun, with the purpose of securing a naval station, this time on the island of San Domingo. Here the power to be dealt with was, to say the least, elusive, for the island had been the scene of successive military revolutions in 1865 and 1866 and was to undergo three in 1867.³ In 1866 Cabral, President for the moment of San Domingo, opened negotiations for the sale of Samana Bay. Admiral Porter, accompanied by Frederick W. Seward, the assistant secretary of state, was sent to investigate ; but further steps were for the time prevented by a fresh outbreak of civil war in the island. As yet all things had been kept in purely diplomatic channels, the public being aware that something was in the air about the West Indies, but paying very little attention to it.

Suddenly, in the winter of 1867, an utterly unforeseen opportunity for annexation came in Seward's way, which he seized

¹ For negotiations with Denmark see J. Parton, *The Danish Islands* (Boston, 1869) ; Pierce, *Sumner*, IV, 328, 613 ; Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 48.

² F. W. Seward, *Seward*, III, 302 ; Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 48.

³ For Seward's negotiations with San Domingo, see Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 486-489 ; also *Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 17, 41 Cong., 3 sess.*

with the utmost alacrity. This was the offer by Baron Stoeckl, the Russian envoy, to sell the Russian possessions in North America.¹ The idea of such a purchase was not wholly new, for it had been suggested once or twice before, notably in 1859, at the instance of Senator W. M. Gwin of California,² but nothing had taken place immediately before 1867 to raise the question of annexation. All that Seward had done had been to refer to the Russian minister a petition of the Washington territorial legislature for better fishing privileges. Russia had had no profit from Alaska ; it was at arm's length, bordering on the territory of England, an unfriendly power ; and, now that the leases of the Russian American and Hudson Bay companies had expired, the occasion seemed favorable for getting rid of an undesirable piece of property. The proposal for a bargain was purely a matter of Russian initiative, but Seward did not hesitate. After a very brief negotiation, terms of cession were agreed upon. The treaty was signed mysteriously at dead of night on March 30, 1867, and on April 1 it was submitted to the Senate. There it was at once considered in executive session and, after one brief debate, was almost unanimously ratified on April 9.³ Seward's policy of secrecy, swiftness and suavity had succeeded admirably. At no time had any knowledge of the negotiations reached the public, so that the sudden introduction and speedy ratification of the treaty came as a total surprise. The bewildered comments of the newspaper press during the week while the treaty was pending indicate clearly the entire absence of any popular feeling for or against annexation. In the Senate, so far as can be learned, the general feeling was of ignorance and indifference ; and the ratification was due to a docile following of Sumner's long and able plea in behalf of the treaty and to a sentiment of regard for Russia, more than to any real opinion on the merits of expansion.⁴

¹ The authorities on the Alaska negotiations are as follows : C. Sumner, Speech on the Cession of Russian America, in Works, XI, 186-349 ; House Exec. Doc. no. 177, 40 Cong., 2 sess. ; Pierce, Sumner, IV, 324-327 ; F. W. Seward, Seward, III, 346 ; Bancroft, Seward, II, 474.

² Speech of Sumner, in Works, XI, 203.

³ Pierce, Sumner, IV, 325-328.

⁴ "There is little doubt that a like offer from any other European government would have been rejected." — Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, II, 333.

Seward then turned with undiminished zeal to the West Indian project and during the spring and summer tried to accelerate the lingering negotiations with Denmark. By July a price was finally agreed upon, \$7,500,000 for two islands; but the Danish ministry insisted on allowing the inhabitants of the ceded territories to vote on the question, which Seward objected to as likely to cause delay. The fact was that the shrewd secretary had become aware, since the ratification of the Alaska treaty, that popular sentiment was by no means favorable to expansion, and he was increasingly anxious to hasten matters.¹ At length, yielding the point of a popular vote, Seward caused the treaty to be signed at Copenhagen, October 24. Meanwhile he had hastened to secure the actual transfer of Alaska from Russia, although the appropriation of purchase money had yet to be made by the House of Representatives. On October 18, 1867, General Rousseau took formal possession, through the complaisance of Russia.²

It was none too soon; for within a month the House of Representatives showed for the first time how public sentiment was likely to regard Seward's plans. On November 25, 1867, C. C. Washburn, of Wisconsin, offered the following resolution:

That in the present financial condition of the country any further purchases of territory are inexpedient and this House will hold itself under no obligations to vote money to pay for any such purchase unless there is greater necessity for the same than now exists.

Washburn explained this as not intended to apply to Alaska, but more particularly to St. Thomas. "I intend," he said, "to serve notice upon the kingdom of Denmark that this House will not pay for that purchase." After a short debate this resolution was adopted without a division.³

¹ Seward wrote to Yeaman: "The desire for the acquisition of territory has sensibly abated. In short we have come to value dollars more and dominion less. I do not hesitate to say that the procrastination of negotiations even for those two islands may wear out the popular desire for even that measure."—F. W. Seward, *Seward*, III, 369.

² F. W. Seward, *Seward*, III, 368; House Exec. Doc. no. 177, 40 Cong., 2 sess.

³ Congressional Globe, 40 Cong., 1 sess., 792. In order to consider the resolution the House voted to suspend the rules, 93 to 43.

At about the same time the unfortunate Danish islands were successively devastated by an earthquake and a tropical cyclone, and newspapers began to come out flatly against their annexation as worthless and expensive.¹

Notwithstanding these ominous signs, the treaty was pushed to a conclusion; the plebiscite was held in January, 1868, and both islands almost unanimously voted their approval of annexation; but the treaty, submitted to the Senate on December 3, 1867, although ratified by the islanders and by the Danish Chambers, remained untouched with the committee on foreign affairs through the whole long session. Seward's favorite policy of secrecy and suddenness was no longer possible.

On June 30, 1868, Gen. N. P. Banks, at this time the leading expansionist in the House, introduced the appropriation for the Alaska purchase money, now due for over a year, and there followed the first considerable public debate on the merits of this annexation and of expansion in general.² In spite of the fact that the treaty had been ratified and the territory handed over, an active minority urged the House to refuse the appropriation, and many who felt that repudiation was impossible censured the treaty and the transfer of possession. Some argued against payment, on the ground that it would help the Danish negotiations. "Pay this money," said Ferriss of New York, "and to-morrow a treaty for the purchase of St. Thomas and St. John will be thrust in our faces."³ Nevertheless, the fact of actual possession of the territory and the strong feelings of friendship entertained for Russia made the opposition futile. The upshot of an ill-tempered debate was the passage of the appropriation, with an amendment asserting that the assent of Congress was necessary to the validity of the treaty.⁴ This claim, reviving

¹ Bancroft, Seward, II, 484; F. W. Seward, Seward, III, 371; J. Parton, *The Danish Islands*, 33.

² *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess.; summarized in Blaine's *Twenty Years of Congress*, II, 333-340.

³ *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., 3668.

⁴ "Whereas the subjects thus embraced in the stipulations of said Treaty are among the subjects which by the Constitution of the United States are submitted to the power of Congress . . . and it being for such reason necessary that the consent of Congress should be given to the said treaty before the same can have

the famous one made at the time of the Jay treaty, was summarily struck out by the Senate, and the House submitted to a compromise which was a virtual surrender.¹

During the next session of Congress Seward seems to have abandoned the Danish treaty. At all events he took no active steps in its behalf. General Raasloff, however, the Danish minister, a man long resident in the United States and very popular in Washington society, made a desperate effort to win over the Senate, appearing personally and by counsel before the committee on foreign affairs, giving dinners, distributing pamphlets, calling on Sumner almost daily. His efforts were entirely vain. The committee was unanimously against the treaty and, although out of consideration for Raasloff it was never actually rejected, it was suffered to lie on the table.² A year later an adverse report was given and the matter definitely ended.³

But, while Raasloff was fighting his losing battle, Seward in the last moments of his term made a final effort to bring about annexation by surprise, this time of San Domingo. The Samana Bay project, begun in 1866, had been revived in November, 1867, by Cabral, but had been again cut off by a revolution. In 1868 General Baez, now in control, approached Seward through the American representative in San Domingo and also through an agent named Fabens, with an offer not only of Samana Bay but of annexation.⁴ There being no time for the negotiation and ratification of a treaty, two daring attempts were made to secure the end by indirect means.⁵ The first, probably instigated by Seward, was the introduction by General Banks on January 12 of a joint resolution extending a protectorate over Hayti and San Domingo. After a long debate, in which much complaint was made of the vagueness of Banks's proposal, the

full force and effect . . . Sec. I. Be it enacted . . . that the assent of Congress is hereby given to the stipulation of said treaty."—Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., 3659.

¹ *Ibid.*, 4154, 4310, 4321, 4392, 4404.

² Pierce, Sumner, IV, 328.

³ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁴ F. W. Seward, Seward, III, 392; Bancroft, Seward, II, 488; Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 17, 41 Cong., 3 sess., p. 7.

⁵ See Seward's letter to Banks, in F. W. Seward, Seward, III, 392.

resolution was laid on the table, 126 to 36.¹ Two weeks later a more surprising move was made by G. S. Orth of Indiana, who on February 1 introduced a joint resolution to annex San Domingo, demanded the previous question and tried to cut off debate. The House was not to be stampeded in this fashion and laid the resolution on the table, 110 to 63.²

So ended Seward's régime. He had played his game skillfully and with a weak hand had scored one success. Had the Danish government met him halfway, as the Russians had done, his policy of secrecy and suddenness might possibly have brought St. Thomas under the flag; as it was, the procrastination and vacillation of the Danes gave time for an opposition to develop against which Seward, the suspected and discredited minister of the hated Johnson, was entirely unable to contend.

Seward's successor as an annexationist leader was none other than President Grant, who was his own foreign minister in matters relating to expansion. Grant's military habit of mind led him to greater directness of action than Seward's and to an utter disregard of ordinary diplomatic procedure. Moreover, unlike Seward, he came into office with tremendous prestige and a perfect willingness to fight in order to carry through his plans.

Now, although Grant had no intention of imitating Seward,³ he had no sooner entered office than he proceeded to take up the San Domingo scheme just touched upon by Seward in the last months of his term. On being approached by an agent of Baez,⁴ Grant was won to a high opinion of the military and economic value of San Domingo and sent his private secretary,

¹ Congressional Globe, 40 Cong., 3 sess., 317, 333. Banks was very averse to giving the term "protectorate" any definite meaning.

² *Ibid.*, 769. Banks tried vainly on February 8 to reintroduce Orth's motion. — *Ibid.*, 927.

³ He is reported to have repudiated the St. Thomas treaty, as "one of Seward's schemes." — Pierce, Sumner, IV, 622.

⁴ This was J. W. Fabens, who plays throughout a leading part in the San Domingo affair. — J. D. Cox, "How Judge Hoar ceased to be Attorney-General," in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1895, p. 164. See also Grant's Message of April 5, 1871, in Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 129.

Gen. O. H. Babcock, with instructions to make inquiry as to Dominican feeling.¹ Babcock, as is well known, proceeded on September 4 to execute a protocol for a treaty of annexation, promising that General Grant would use his influence to secure its ratification. When Babcock brought back his protocol, Grant at once approved and sent him with three men-of-war to the island, where, on November 29, another definite treaty was made and the Baez government guaranteed against all enemies until it was ratified. Secretary Robeson, of the navy, then proceeded to keep the waters of San Domingo full of United States men-of-war, including ironclads, whose admiral openly threatened the authorities of Hayti with violence if they interfered in San Domingo. So, during 1869-71 Baez remained in power in San Domingo, backed to a greater or less extent by the presence of a United States squadron.

The stupefaction of the Cabinet when these matters were reported² was only exceeded by the horror of Sumner, chairman of the Senate committee on foreign affairs, when Grant sent the treaty to the Senate on January 10.³ At first scarcely any one seemed to favor the treaty, in Congress or outside, the Senate committee being nearly as unanimous against it as it had been against St. Thomas. But Grant was no Seward, to submit with patience to delay. Annoyed at the slowness of the Senate,⁴ he sent a special message on March 14 urging action, and by talking to senators personally began to show how great his interest was. The "administration" element, those men devoted to party unity, as well as Grant's special followers, now

¹ The leading authorities for the San Domingo negotiations are Sen. Exec. Doc. nos. 17 and 34, 41 Cong., 3 sess., which include the documents submitted by the secretary of state in answer to resolutions of the Senate; also Pierce's Sumner, IV, 426-496. Other papers are in the House Exec. Doc., 41 Cong., 2 sess., no. 237; 3 sess., nos. 42, 43.

² J. D. Cox, in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1895, p. 167.

³ Grant made a clumsy attempt to secure Sumner's aid in advance, as Seward had done in the case of the Alaska treaty, by calling at his house and asking his support. Sumner replied evasively that he was, in general, an "administration man," which Grant took for a pledge of support. The upshot was a cry of bad faith against Sumner, when he opposed the treaty, and a question of veracity between the two men. — Pierce, Sumner, IV, 433.

⁴ Pierce, Sumner, IV, 439; A. Badeau, Grant in Peace, p. 213.

began to change front and the plan soon gained supporters. On March 24 the committee reported adversely to the treaty and the Senate considered it in a secret session, occupied mainly by a long speech of Sumner against ratification. After this no further action was taken until June 29.¹

In the interval Grant's efforts continued. He interviewed senators, caused Secretary Fish, whose support of the scheme was reluctant and half-hearted, to labor with Sumner, and is reported to have used patronage largely to gain the support of carpet-bag senators, even though this involved dismissing Judge Hoar, the attorney-general, and replacing him with a Southerner.² At the same time B. F. Butler, of Massachusetts, already standing high in Grant's favor, signalized himself by making no less than nine successive attempts to introduce into the House, by unanimous consent, a joint resolution providing for the annexation of San Domingo.³ As the limit of the period for ratification approached, Grant's efforts increased. He sent another long message on May 31, and later took up his station in the president's room in the Capitol where he sent for senator after senator in succession. On June 29 debate was finally resumed in the Senate and on June 30 the treaty came to a vote. The result is reported as 28 to 28, or, counting pairs, 32 to 30—a majority of but two, when a two-thirds vote was necessary. When one compares this with the attitude of the Senate on the St. Thomas treaty, it is clear that Grant's influence had accomplished a great deal.

But this failure of the treaty did not cause Grant to desist. As, when foiled by Lee before Richmond, he moved by the left flank, so now he returned to the attack in the next session of Congress, by recommending in his annual message the

¹ Pierce, Sumner, IV, 440-442.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 439, 440; J. D. Cox, in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1895, pp. 167-170. See also New York *Evening Post*, March 25; New York *World*, March 23, 26, June 26-July 1, 1871; speeches of S. S. Cox and others in *Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess. Badeau, in his *Grant in Peace*, 214, says it was the common opinion that, if Grant would only have found an office for Sumner's friend, Ashley, the Massachusetts senator would have ceased to be troublesome.

³ On April 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 20; May 12; June 1, 14. These were blocked by Democratic Congressmen amid increasing ridicule at each repetition.

annexation of San Domingo by resolution, "as in the case of Texas."¹ He also urged the appointment of a commission to negotiate a new treaty. The vote on the treaty in July had shown that possibly a majority of the Senate might favor a joint resolution, and the idea was not at once dispelled by the next step. Senator O. P. Morton, the leading supporter of the President, introduced a resolution for a commission of inquiry, which was considered on December 21 and 22. It was in this discussion that Sumner, shocked beyond measure at the naval support being furnished Baez, made his famous and bitter attack on Grant's policy as a "dance of blood," thereby stirring up an envenomed controversy. After a debate filled with stinging personalities, Sumner's amendments were rejected by large majorities and the resolution passed 32 to 9.² On January 9 and 10 it was introduced into the House by Orth, who tried as on a previous occasion to prevent debate. He was overridden, however, and a general discussion of the whole subject took place, scarcely less bitter than that in the Senate. Charges of corruption were made and repelled. Swann asked :

Why the interest which has been manifested in this whole subject? Why do we see here day after day distinguished senators who are known to be in accord with the purpose which the President proposes to carry out? Why do we see here the Secretary of the Navy and the Postmaster-General lobbying upon this floor for the purpose of passing through this extraordinary measure in such hot haste?³

The result was different, for the House, on the motion of J. A. Ambler of Pennsylvania, adopted by a vote of 108 to 76 an amendment in these words : "provided that nothing in these resolutions will be held as committing Congress to the policy of annexing the territory of said republic."⁴ This vote of the House killed the San Domingo scheme, for it was clear that

¹ Richardson, Messages and Papers of the President, VII, 101.

² Congressional Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 183, 190, 222, 225, 236; Pierce, Sumner, IV, 456-461; W. D. Foulke, O. P. Morton, II, 152-168.

³ Congressional Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 411.

⁴ Congressional Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 381, 416; summarized in Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, II, 458-463.

annexation by joint resolution was not possible. The Senate adopted the House amendment,¹ and the commission was sent, consisting of Andrew D. White, S. G. Howe and B. F. Wade. This committee made a warmly favorable report, which Grant submitted to the Senate on April 5, 1871, but no action was ever taken.²

At about the same time Grant, in answer to resolutions introduced by Sumner, submitted papers making clear the part the navy had been playing in the whole affair, which led to a second severe attack on Grant by Sumner in the debate of March 27.³ Meanwhile Sumner's opposition had cost him the chairmanship of the committee on foreign affairs which he had held since 1861. So, in an explosion of personalities, bad temper and vindictiveness the San Domingo scheme finally came to its end. Grant reiterated his views on later occasions, but took no further steps to frame a treaty. The masterful, persistent, popular President had failed as signally as had the suave, secretive and unpopular Secretary of State.

II.

In considering this expansion movement as a whole, it is worth while to note the resemblances and contrasts it offers to other annexations. It differs obviously from the cases of the Mexican and Spanish cessions of 1848 and 1898 respectively, in not being the logical result of foreign conquest. It was in a certain sense the outcome of the Civil War, inasmuch as military considerations played a large part in each of the proposed purchases; but, except in the case of St. Thomas, the hope of economic gain was of greater weight. It differs from the purchase of Louisiana, 1803, of Florida, 1819, and the annexation of Texas, 1845, in the absence of any pressing visible reasons, such as the desire to get rid of an unpleasant neighbor in the first two cases and the existence of a vigorous public

¹ There was a second savagely personal debate, *Congressional Globe*, 426.

² The report of the commission is in *Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 9, 42 Cong., 1 sess.*

³ *Congressional Globe*, 42 Cong., 1 sess., 294-307; *Pierce, Sumner*, IV, 483-487.

demand in the second and third. Finally, it was unconnected with any internal political questions, therein differing entirely from those annexations made, or attempted, in the hope of gaining additional territory open to slavery. This differentiates it from the efforts to annex Cuba under Pierce and Buchanan, a movement which in some respects resembled that under Seward and Grant.

The only case which is entirely parallel is that of the attempted annexation of Hawaii under President Harrison. Here we find expansion for its own sake in time of peace and the acquisition of a non-contiguous territory justified by military and commercial reasons that were applicable almost *verbatim* to the earlier efforts.¹ If we neglect the events of the Spanish War, we find the recent annexations bearing a closely similar character, distant and tropical territories being acquired for reasons identical with those urged thirty years before. One may then fairly consider the movement of 1865-71 as prefiguring, in the essential questions at issue, the movement of 1893-98.

In the diplomatic and congressional action during this period we find several striking features: the shrewd and secret diplomacy of Seward, the surprising suddenness of the Alaskan annexation, the intense eagerness and military contempt or ignorance of international conventionalities shown by Grant, and the dramatic quarrel between Sumner and the Grant administration, with its result in the humiliation and complete deposition of the great Senator from his position as party leader. But legally the movement showed little that was novel. Annexation was attempted by the treaty power only, and the attempt by the House in 1868 to reassert its right to approve or reject the financial parts of the Alaskan treaty was scarcely more than an outbreak of bad temper. Had Grant, Butler and some other radical expansionists had their way, the case of Hawaii in 1898 would have been anticipated in the admission by joint resolution of San Domingo as a territory; but this plan never proceeded beyond the opening

¹ See detailed comparison in *Nation*, December 16, 1897.

stage, owing to its evident hopelessness in the face of an adverse majority. The scheme was referred to once or twice in debate and denounced as unconstitutional, but it was never a real issue.¹

The motives of the leaders in this movement, although considered mysterious at the time, seem clear to-day. With Seward, for all his secrecy, there was no other purpose than the wish to acquire valuable territory and incidentally to increase his own fame.² This is shown clearly in his writings. Neither in Alaska nor in St. Thomas does it appear that there were any special private interests involved.³ As for the Russian and Danish governments, their action seems to have been prompted by the desire to exchange outlying possessions of little value for ready money.⁴ Political motives appear also to have had a share in the case of Russia, the Czar preferring to have the friendly United States as a neighbor, rather than hostile England.⁵

On turning to San Domingo, however, one encounters a different atmosphere; the military adventurer Baez seems to have been surrounded by friends with considerable pecuniary interests in the island, who took a leading part in promoting the annexation. From the outset there is a smack of petty intrigue, much talk of concessions, grants, interests, *etc.*, and an evident connection of certain New York speculators with the Baez government. It is safe to say that the almost universal belief that there was something corrupt in the whole affair played a large, if not a decisive, part in causing the rejection of the project.⁶ Nobody at that time or since who knew

¹ See remarks of Thurman and Davis on December 20, 1870, in *Congressional Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 193, 195.

² Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 470-472, 490, 491; F. W. Seward, *Seward*, III, 383. In the language of Seward's opponent, it became his "mania for buying land." — *New York Tribune*, November 13, 1867; *Boston Advertiser*, April 22, 1867.

³ See Sumner's speech (*Works*, XI, 205-207) for evidences of Californian interests in Alaska.

⁴ See Parton, *The Danish Islands*, *passim*, and Sumner's speech, *Works*, XI, 201-203.

⁵ Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 474; House Exec. Doc., 40 Cong., 2 sess., vol. i; Diplomatic Correspondence, 1867-68; Sumner's speech, *Works*, XI, 201.

⁶ The statistics as to concessions and privileges are found in Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 17, 41 Cong., 3 sess.; also in S. Hazard, *Santo Domingo, Past and*

Grant held that he was personally corrupt. His motive seems to have been an honest belief that San Domingo would be a valuable possession and ought to be annexed. The extremely strong interest he took, more marked than in anything else in his two terms, seems to have been largely due to sheer pugnacity. As opposition developed, his interest grew into a determination to push the matter through as a personal affair. Being a man of untimely reticence and singularly dense on points of civil propriety, he took unexplained steps which were susceptible of the worst construction. Such were his amazing use of Babcock, his personal dealings with senators, and his employment of the navy to protect Baez for almost two years.¹

Since this was the epoch of plebiscites in Europe, that feature played its part in the West Indies, although to Sumner's regret² it was inapplicable to Alaska. In St. Thomas and St. John the people were doubtless in favor of annexation.³ In San Domingo a vote, interrupted by guerilla fighting, was taken in 1870, and the result is stated to have been overwhelmingly for annexation; but the circumstances seem to have been anything but favorable for a free expression of opinion. The commissioners of 1871, however, reported the existence of a general desire for union with the United States. Just how much weight to attach to these statements is not

Present (New York, 1873), p. 491. For testimony as to the character and methods of Baez and his associates, see Report of Select Committee appointed to investigate the Memorial of Davis Hatch, June 25, 1870, Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 234, 41 Cong., 2 sess. The current newspaper gossip is illustrated by *Nation*, December 29, 1870; New York *Tribune*, February 2, June 15, 1870; New York *World*, March 15, May 24, 1870; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1870.

¹ "It would sometimes happen that his habitual reticence would make him the victim of sophistries which were not exposed and which his tenacity of purpose made him cling to when once he had accepted them." (J. D. Cox, in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1895, p. 173.) The *Nation*, December 29, 1870, spoke of Grant's "unfortunate facility in being hoodwinked by plausible knaves." "Grant may be sincere and honest, but can the country trust his judgment?"—New York *World*, May 23, 1870.

² M. Story, Sumner, 339.

³ The vote is described as being officially controlled, and the voters "a sorry-looking crowd."—New York *World*, February 10, 1868.

clear, in view of the peculiar nature of the San Domingo people and government.¹

Turning from the negotiations to their effect on the United States, it is interesting to trace the differing phases of public opinion during the years 1865-71. Of course, at no time were questions of annexation foremost in people's minds ; for in contrast with the events of reconstruction, the quarrel of Johnson with Congress, the elections of 1866 and '68, the impeachment trial, financial legislation and the dealings with Great Britain over the Alabama claims, the question of the expenditure of a few millions and the acquisition or rejection of a few not very attractive pieces of territory seemed a mere side issue. Newspapers very often noticed the progress of negotiations without taking the trouble to comment upon them. It was not until the sudden ratification of the Alaska treaty, when people realized that the country actually had a quantity of new territory on its hands, that editorial writers found it necessary to have an opinion.² At once it appeared that there was a very widespread doubt of the value of Alaska or of the necessity of any purchases, and an equally strong opinion, held by some writers, that any expansion was in itself to be commended. In the next autumn, when the news of the St. Thomas treaty came vaguely to America, there arose a steady fire of objections, which increased in severity when the report of the earthquakes of November showed, as the *New York Tribune* said, that "our proposed foothold in the West Indies was likely to be a shaky one."

By the summer of 1868, when the first public debate took place on a question involving expansion, it appeared that there was a sharp division of sentiment in the House. The acute

¹ The taking of the vote is described in R. H. Perry's despatches in 1870, Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 17, 41 Cong., 3 sess. The statement of the commissioners is in their report, Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 9, 42 Cong., 1 sess. Other testimony on the subject is in Hazard's *Santo Domingo, Past and Present*.

² The process was often amusing, owing to the gropings of the editorial mind, but from vague generalities there usually evolved in a short time definite opinions. See, for example, *New York Tribune* and *Boston Advertiser*, March 31-April 10, 1867.

phase of reconstruction was now passing and by the winter of 1868-69 general attention began to turn again toward financial and foreign affairs. Hence, when Grant revived the San Domingo scheme, annexation became at once a public question. In this last period, however, party considerations counted for more than at any previous time. When Seward was in power, there had been a certain tendency for administration papers to uphold his policy and for radical Republicans and ultra Democrats to oppose it out of dislike for him.¹ In Grant's time the circumstances worked the other way; for the strong desire of nearly all Republican editors to maintain harmony in the party made them very cautious in condemning the Domingo scheme and very reluctant to seem to oppose the President.² The same influence is distinctly evident in the Senate and House, but, as has been shown, the desire for harmony and Grant's prestige were not strong enough to overcome the settled opposition developed during the preceding three years. The general attitude of the country was indifferent, lukewarm, unresponsive.³

Still, though the general atmosphere was unfavorable, there were to be found a good many moderate advocates of the treaties and not a few upholders of "manifest destiny" in its most extreme form. From the utterances of these in Congress or in print, it is easy to summarize the arguments of the annexationists, and it is safe to say that there is not an important reason urged at the present moment for the retention of the Philippines and Porto Rico which is not prefigured in the years in question.

The foremost argument employed to justify the annexation

¹ This is clearly manifested in almost every "radical" Republican paper.

² This is most clearly shown in the attitude of the New York *Tribune*, which had violently opposed the Alaska and Danish treaties and only reluctantly changed front on the San Domingo question in order to uphold the administration. Very many of the leading advocates of Grant's treaty made his wish their avowed reason for supporting it and condemned Sumner, Schurz and others, not so much for opposing annexation as for opposing Grant.

³ There was a public meeting at Cooper Institute, New York City, which favored annexation; but this is reported to have been brought about by some of the Dominican ring, Fabens, Cazneau and others.

of Alaska and San Domingo was that of economic and commercial value. The advocates of these respective treaties found no words too strong to describe the fisheries, furs, forests and mineral wealth of the one territory or the inexhaustible abundance of the tropical products and mines of the other.¹ In fact, they went so far as to produce incredulity by the exaggerations of their language—as when Banks claimed that Alaska controlled the China trade;² when J. A. Johnson of California said, “Give us Alaska and right soon we will make California so great that you will all boast when you go abroad that you live under the same Federal jurisdiction that we do;”³ or when Grant claimed that with the possession of San Domingo “it is easy to see how our large debt abroad is ultimately to be extinguished,”⁴ that it would “restore to us our lost merchant marine” and “furnish our citizens with the necessities of everyday life at cheaper rates than ever before,” and that “calamities would flow from non-acquisition.”⁵

A second argument was in regard to military value. The three territories, it appears, were all “keys.” “Now, sir,” cried Banks, “the possession of Alaska is the key to this ocean.”⁶ “It gives us a paramount influence in the Pacific,” said the *New York Times*, March 31, 1867. For St. Thomas this was the main, almost the only, argument; and it was urged by Seward, through Johnson’s annual message, by Parton in his pamphlet and by a few others.⁷ Vice-Admiral D. D.

¹ The fullest arguments on this score are to be found in House Exec. Doc. no. 177, 40 Cong., 2 sess., on Alaska, and Sen. Exec. Doc. no. 17, 41 Cong., 3 sess., and no. 9, 42 Cong., 1 sess., on San Domingo.

² Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., 3625; Appendix, 388.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3627.

⁴ Message of May 31, 1870.

⁵ Second Annual Message, December 5, 1870. Horace Greeley ridiculed this amusingly, in describing the dinners by which Seward won over senators to support the Alaska treaty. “Mr. Seward’s dinner-table,” said the *Tribune*, April 8, 1867, “is spread regularly with roast treaty, boiled treaty, treaty in bottles, treaty in decanters, treaty garnished with appointments to office, treaty in statistics, treaty in a military point of view, treaty in a territorial grandeur view, treaty clad in furs, ornamented with walrus teeth, fringed with timber and flopping with fish.”

⁶ Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 388.

⁷ Third Annual Message, December 3, 1867; Richardson, Messages, VI, 579; Parton, *The Danish Islands*, 6, 61-65; *Nation*, February 3, 1870.

Porter said : " It is a central point from which any or all of the West India Islands can be assailed, while it is impervious to attack. It is the keystone to the arch of the West Indies ; it commands them all." ¹ As regards San Domingo, this claim was vigorously pushed by Grant and his followers. " It commands the entrance to the Caribbean Sea and the isthmus transits of commerce." ² " It is the key to the Gulf of Mexico," said J. E. Stevenson of Ohio, " a prize to any power ; to us it is only less than a necessity." ³

To accelerate matters, Grant repeatedly stated that, unless the United States annexed San Domingo, some European nation would do so at once. ⁴ " If refused by us, by what grace can we prevent a foreign power from attempting to secure the prize?" ⁵

Further, the " benevolent assimilation " argument was vigorously urged. Sumner, in his Alaska speech, advocated the treaty as an extension of republican institutions. ⁶ The consent of the people of St. Thomas and St. John was supposed to show their wish for American institutions, but it was with regard to San Domingo that this plea was most persistently employed. As early as February, 1869, the New York *Tribune* stated that the leading men of the island " deem it best, so we are assured, to join their fortunes with ours and work out the problem of their future under our flag and under our institutions." ⁷ But before this, Johnson's message of December 9, 1868, written probably by Seward, had announced that it would not be long " before it will become necessary for this government to lend some effective aid to the solution of the social and political problems which are continually kept before the world by the two republics of the Island of San Domingo," and added that annexation would " receive the consent of the people interested." ⁸ Grant put the case much more strongly :

¹ Parton, *The Danish Islands*, 63.

² *Messages*, VII, 62.

³ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 409.

⁴ *Messages*, VII, 61, 63, 99, 129.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 61. The same argument was used by Sumner regarding Alaska. — Speech in *Works*, XI, 223.

⁶ *Works*, XI, 221.

⁷ February 17, 1869.

⁸ *Messages*, VI, 688, 689.

"The people of San Domingo are not capable of maintaining themselves. . . . They yearn for the protection of our free institutions and laws, our progress and civilization. Shall we refuse them?"¹ He felt impelled to urge the treaty out of regard "for the welfare of a downtrodden race, praying for the blessings of a free and strong government and for protection in the enjoyment of the fruits of their own industry."²

Morton claimed that annexation "has been the earnest desire of the great body of the people . . . with the exception of a few desperate military adventurers."³ "It is certainly for their interest," said W. M. Stewart, of Nevada,

to come under our protecting laws. What they want is stability. There is nothing conceivable that would be of so much benefit to the black man in those islands as annexation to the United States. . . . To talk about their resistance to an European despotism and then to talk of their making the same resistance to annexation to a free Republic, seems to me absurd on the very face of it.⁴

Other arguments to induce the House to appropriate the Alaska purchase money were friendliness to Russia and the necessity of keeping good faith. This last was also urged by Parton in behalf of the Danish treaty.⁵ There can be no doubt that the feeling of regard for Russia played a very great part. It is admitted by almost every one, even by those opposing the treaty.⁶

But above all one encounters the doctrine of "manifest destiny," of expansion as something necessary and inevitable. This was widespread. It was in the air, admitted by very many who opposed the treaties on grounds of expense and proclaimed vigorously by the advocates. There was much talk of annexing Canada,⁷ Cuba, Hawaii and Mexico for various reasons,

¹ Messages, VII, 61.

³ Cong. Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 237.

² *Ibid.*, VII, 129.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁵ Danish Islands, 43, 46. This was ridiculed by the *Tribune*, March 24, 1869.

⁶ Shellabarger, of Ohio, in opposing the treaty, said: "I approach the matter . . . under the enormous pressure which that feeling brings upon my mind that it might be deemed unfriendly on our part toward Russia should we not ratify this treaty." — Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 337.

⁷ Sumner at one time urged that Canada ought to be ceded by Great Britain as recompense for the Alabama damages.

and very little denial of the desirability of such acquisitions — if not immediately, then at some future date. It would be easy to fill pages with illustrations. Sumner held that all North America must become part of the United States.¹ Seward, speaking through Johnson in annual messages, said : “The West Indies naturally gravitate to and may be expected to be absorbed by the continental states, including our own” ;² and later: “Comprehensive national policy would seem to sanction the acquisition and incorporation into our Federal Union of the several adjacent continental and insular communities.”³

Similar views were repeatedly uttered in the House and Senate. B. F. Butler said in 1869 of the West Indies, “They belong to us by position and laws of Nature.”⁴ “Sir,” said Morton in reply to Sumner, “I regard it as destiny, not to be averted by the Senator from Massachusetts, nor by any power, that we shall acquire San Domingo and Cuba and Porto Rico.”⁵ “We rise from rebellion,” said Stevens in the House, “conscious of our power, full of hope and confidence. Such a nation cannot shrink from her destiny. She does not shrink, she welcomes it.”⁶ “I am an original West Indian expansionist,” said T. Fitch, of Nevada ; “I shall vote for the commission because I hope and believe that it will be followed, sooner or later, by the annexation of Dominicana by joint resolution, and I am confident that . . . in due course there will follow the acquisition of Hayti and Cuba.”⁷

There was much talk of expansion as an inevitable general fact, usually introduced by references to Louisiana, Florida and the Mexican acquisitions. “The principle of Chinese exclusiveness and non-expansion,” said the New York *Herald*, “finds few advocates. The progress and expanding power of a great, active and ambitious nation cannot be restrained.”⁸ “Nothing less than a continent,” cried Ignatius Donnelly,

¹ Works, XI, 219–221, 223, 232–234.

² Messages, VI, 580.

³ *Ibid.*, 688, 689.

⁴ Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 3 sess., 333.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 238.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 409.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 411.

⁸ April 11, 1867.

"can suffice as the basis and foundation for that nation in whose destiny is involved the destiny of mankind!"¹ H. Maynard, of Tennessee, exalted "that spirit of expansion, if you please — of aggression, that . . . will eventually make the republic the mistress of the world."² Occasionally the Anglo-Saxon was referred to in a way now familiar.³

On the other side the one predominant argument was that of expense. Every single speech in opposition to expansion dwelt on the financial burdens of the country, many who argued this way avowing their willingness to support an annexation policy under different conditions. Undoubtedly this point was decisive in turning many expansionists against the treaties. In addition, the opponents of annexation invariably began by trying to depreciate the economic value of the land in question. Alaska was subjected to a flood of abuse, especially from the New York *Tribune*, which never referred to it for years without a sneer. It was denounced as "worthless, inhospitable, wretched, God-forsaken," and was called "Walrussia" from its supposed sole product, "a national ice house," *etc.*⁴ St. Thomas and St. John were decried as petty islands, barren and worthless. "In thirty-three hours," said the *Tribune*, "St. Thomas has 327 earthquakes. What a nice place for a naval station!"⁵ Every effort was made to prove the islands a useless source of expense.

The naval argument in favor of purchase was met by the reply that the islands would entail expense without rendering any compensating service, would call for fortifications and a navy,⁶ and would be simply a vulnerable point in war.

As to the desire of the Dominicans for the protection of the United States, this was usually denied,⁷ but was quite as

¹ Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 403.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., 335, speech of T. Mullins.

⁴ See list of adjectives in F. W. Seward, Seward, III, 367.

⁵ December 13, 1867; January 1, 1868.

⁶ New York *Tribune*, September 11, 1867; October 14, 1868. Schurz, in Cong. Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., Appendix, 32.

⁷ See Sumner's speech of December 20, 1870, *passim*.

often met with the argument that the country could not afford to annex a barbarous people. "The first duty of the American people is to its own people," said the *Nation*.¹ The *Tribune* said plainly :

We cannot afford to swallow new territory and peoples too rapidly. Our republican institutions now more than ever before can rest safely only on the general intelligence and virtue of the people. . . . Here are elements enough for lowering the standard of our suffrage. We need to make haste very slowly indeed toward this further addition of the turbulent, indolent, unstable and uneducated Spanish Americans.²

Schurz, in a similar vein, argued the unsuitability of a tropical island for the white race, supporting his view by the history of colonization.³

Such considerations led to the question of the future government of these acquisitions, and here the opponents placed themselves squarely on the ground of the present anti-imperialists. Many of them were Democrats, whose attitude was much affected by their opposition to the Republican reconstruction policy.⁴ The *Tribune*, in September, 1867, stated the case clearly : "We cannot have colonies, dependencies, subjects, without renouncing the essential conceptions of domestic institutions." The New York *World* argued that a colonial policy was unconstitutional, quoting the Dred Scott decision.⁵ B. F. Butler, later a vigorous expansionist, protested in the Alaska debate against the acquisition of uncontiguous country as a new departure.⁶ J. Scott, of Pennsylvania, in the San Domingo debate, said : "We are now asked not simply to annex territory within the continent, but to go outside and commence the policy of insular acquisition. It is a wide departure we are asked to take from the original

¹ December 29, 1870.

² June 15, 1870.

³ Cong. Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., Appendix, 25.

⁴ The Indiana Legislature passed a resolution against the San Domingo Treaty.
— W. D. Foulke, *Life of O. P. Morton*, II, 168.

⁵ March 4, 1870.

⁶ Cong. Globe, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 402.

policy of the government.”¹ Senator Bayard went still further :

It is proposed [he said] that we should embark the government of the United States upon the vast and trackless sea of imperialism, to change it into an imperial government of outlying and distant dependencies with a foreign population, strangers to us in race, in blood, in customs. . . . We have natural boundaries. One of these is the Atlantic Ocean. Are the people of America prepared to disregard every tradition of their government? . . . Such a scheme of empire, if indulged in, will destroy our republican system of government. The population of this island or of these islands can never be governed by a constitutional government like ours; they are utterly unfitted for it.

He then cited Washington's Farewell Address.² Schurz also declared that the West Indies could never be self-governing, but would be “provinces, colonies, satrapies . . . which will corrupt our public life and impart to our government a military character most destructive to its republican attributes.”³ Lastly, a certain portion of the present anti-imperialists were represented by Sumner, who in the San Domingo case saw nothing but the injustice of annexing a people against its will and dwelt almost entirely upon the details of Grant's intervention, which, as has been said, he painted in the darkest colors. This was largely due to the fact that San Domingo was a negro community, and it shocked all his sentiments of friendship to a downtrodden race to find its only self-governing island threatened. He summed up his position in his peroration :
I protest against this resolution as another stage in a drama of blood. I protest against it in the name of justice outraged by violence, in the name of humanity insulted, in the name of the weak trodden down.⁴

The impression produced by a study of the contemporary debates and newspapers is that there was a great deal of latent expansionism in the country, and that under different

¹ Cong. Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 194.

² *Ibid.*, 225, 226.

³ *Ibid.*, Appendix, 29.

⁴ Pierce, Sumner, IV, 441, 456, 457, 483; Cong. Globe, 41 Cong., 3 sess., 226-231.

conditions the schemes of Seward and Grant might very well have been carried through. But the pressure of debt, of taxation, of a depreciated currency rendered any unnecessary expenses objectionable unless for immediate results, and the appalling difficulties of the negro question in the South made the annexation of a turbulent negro community unattractive. Moreover, the attention of the country was fully occupied with internal affairs, and the tendency was to resent Seward's and Grant's attempts to enter upon an expansionist policy as an annoying interruption, almost an impertinence.

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